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THE GEOGRAPHY OF FAIRS: ILLUSTRATED BY OLD-WORLD EXAMPLES

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The fair is one of the most characteristic features of Old-World commerce, whether considered historically or in respect of certain particular products. Yet it is a subject that has inspired little geographical study.¹ The reason doubtless lies in the fact that in all western Europe general fairs on a large scale are an institution of the past, while the surviving fairs are too restricted in their sphere of interest as regards place or products to have attracted attention. The recent sample fairs appear to represent a permanent feature of international trade, but their creation is too recent to have permitted geographical analysis.

From the geographical point of view the problem seems to have been complicated by the confusion of four analogous institutions which may exist side by side or in combination but which are fundamentally distinct and go back most probably to at least two different origins. In the one group figure the general commodity fair and the recently created sample fair; in the other the town market and the cattle fair. The commodity fair represents the sole mechanism of large-scale commerce, and especially international commerce, in a state of civilization, when there was no security for regular exchange nor were means of transportation organized; it has declined with the progress of material civilization. The sample fair is a creation of today and in some measure artificial. It is directly derived from the commodity fair though perhaps best described as a resurrection of it under an entirely new guise and adapted to modern needs.

The town market and the live-stock fair appear to have been united in the beginning and to have arisen from the same causes and the same geographical conditions. But they early became dissociated, responding to different needs, and finally became distinct. The town market which today retains its old-time characteristics is not germane to the present discussion. The live-stock fair, an apparent derivative of the commodity fair, is in reality an independent institution, perhaps the more ancient in its fundamentals and at all events the more persistent, for it still flourishes at the present time. Unlike the commodity fair it is not the response to changing economic and social conditions of a certain stage of civilization but to natural controls of pastoral life.

¹ Practically all the geographical studies written on this subject concern live-stock fairs (see pp. 546-557 of this article). See also G. M. Wrigley: *Fairs of the Central Andes*, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol 7, 1919, pp. 65-80. The works already published on the subject of fairs, though almost exclusively by historians and jurists, furnish abundant documentary material from which it is possible to draw clear ideas as to the nature of the institution in its geographical implications.

Commodity Fairs²

ORIGIN OF FAIRS

Travelers in primitive countries often remark the more or less periodic gathering at customary places and dates of men from different tribes representing unlike modes of life—that is of people having products to exchange. The animated crowd trafficking one day in the midst of dust and noise is dispersed in the evening to regain the more or less secluded and fortified places where the daily existence of the tribes is pursued. In this way arises a primi-

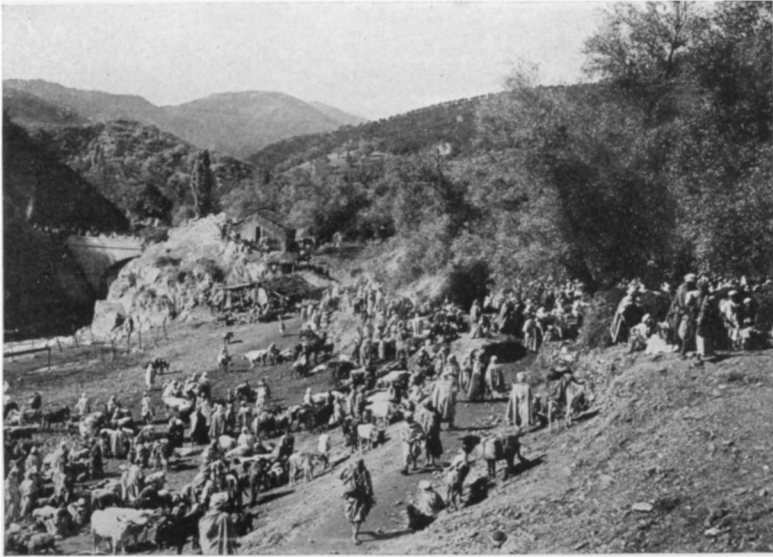


FIG. 1.—Market fair in northern Africa held in the open country. The weekly fair of Suk-el-Jemaa in Kabylia. (Photograph by Raoul Blanchard.)

tive commercial organ permitting backward folk to reconcile two contradictory needs; seclusion for safety and intercourse for exchange.

The place of exchange is a sort of *neutral ground*, and the period of exchange a *truce* where the normal state of existence, if not of warfare, is at least of hostile indifference.³ In its rudimentary form this kind of commerce is what German writers have termed *Grenzhandel*, "frontier commerce."⁴

² A wealth of facts and valuable bibliographical references are to be found in Paul Huvelin: *Essai historique sur le droit des marchés et des foires*, Paris, 1897. See also Cornelius Walford: *Fairs, Past and Present, A Chapter in the History of Commerce*, London, 1883.

³ Numerous instances of the neutral character of these primitive trading assemblies are given by P. J. Hamilton Grierson in "The Silent Trade" (Edinburgh, 1903) in a section of which is traced the connection between the primitive market and the still more primitive commercial method of the "silent trade." R. Hennig in "Der Stumme Handel' als pandemische Erscheinung" (*Zeitschr. für Sozialwissenschaft*, Vol. 10, 1920, pp. 10-12, Leipzig), also expresses the opinion that the "blind and dumb" trade of primitive peoples is the origin of large-scale commerce and especially of commerce by fairs.

⁴ Fr. Graebner: *Handel bei Naturvölkern*, in Karl Andree's "Geographie des Welthandels" (3 vols., Frankfurt on the Main, 1910-13), Vol. 1, pp. 149-218; reference on pp. 158 *et seq.*

In the South Sea Islands the sound of a sacred drum announces the opening and closing of the truce. On the Congo during the period devoted to commerce the carrying of arms is strictly interdicted. By reason of their nature these meetings generally avoid inhabited places, a primitive feature that is often long persistent. In Africa today most of the periodic markets are held in the open country.⁵

Upon such gatherings for exchange nature imposes a certain periodicity more or less related to the variations of the season and the working calendar of these "nature" people, *Naturvölker* of the German writers. The periodicity may be of considerable amplitude: among the nomads of northern Asia commercial contact with the outside world is made only once a year.⁶ When the requirements of exchange become more complex merchandise must be transported from a distance. But the ways of communication are still the rough roads furnished by nature. Security is precarious. Every convoy must be organized to withstand the natural perils and the menace of pillage; thus arises the caravan. Normally the caravan is a numerous body every member of which is assigned his definite function under the absolute authority and conduct of a responsible chief. The familiar comparison between a caravan and a ship may be recalled.

At this stage of civilization the only vehicle of commerce on a large scale is the caravan. Now by definition it functions intermittently, hence commerce must also be intermittent. To minimize inconvenience movements of caravans at an early date became regular, that is periodic. It was thus in the times of Herodotus and Strabo, as it is now the rule in Arab countries. Naturally the return of caravans at fixed times to their accustomed "ports" was followed by gatherings for trade. As the great religious festivals also drew great concourses of people, it was mutually advantageous to have them coincident: the caravans found it to their interest to arrive at the times of the festivals; the sovereign power that established the fairs—as was the case in historic times for the most part—fixed them on the great feast days. The word "fair" (the etymology is no longer in doubt) is from *feriae*, feast.

It may be remarked that in Christian countries the great festivals which most often accompany the great fairs are those of the warm season. They are Easter, Whitsuntide, Trinity; then the six great saints' days which follow month by month—St. John (June 24), St. James (July 24), St. Bartholomew (August 24), St. Matthew (September 21), St. Simon and St. Jude (October 28), and St. Andrew (November 30). Some fairs occur at Christmas and Epiphany, but they are less numerous. In the non-Christian countries there is a similar resemblance between the religious, the commercial, and the climatic rhythm. Political anniversaries sometimes play a like part to the religious festivals.

⁵ Giotto Dainelli and Olinto Marinelli: *Risultati scientifici di un viaggio nella Colonia Eritrea*, Florence, 1912.

⁶ Graebner, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

Yet there are fairs which now at least do not appear to correspond to any festival date, and such cases are not infrequent. In some instances—and these are rare—the two events appear never to have been coincident; in others—as is ordinarily the case—they were originally connected but for reasons of convenience have been dissociated. And again the festival phase can survive the fair proper, of which it may remain the only souvenir.

However, the fair, because it is a commercial institution, will naturally be far more dependent on the physical conditions ruling the movement of caravans than on the social and historic factors regulating the feasts. But, as we have pointed out, coincidence of the fair with a feast augments its chances of continued success. Under this more complex form the commodity fair remains much as we have defined it in its primitive state. It arises from the combination of the two factors, frontier commerce and caravan transport.

THE GREAT COMMODITY FAIRS: HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The most ancient association between caravan trade and the fair goes back to China in the twelfth century before our era.⁷ It is seen in ancient India, in the days of Babylon and Nineveh, then in Egypt, Nubia, and Arabia at the time when the Phoenicians were the great intermediaries of international commerce.⁸ The national assemblies of ancient Greece with their religious ceremonials and games were at the same time the opportunity for merchandise fairs. The most important of these, owing to an admirable geographical position, were those of Corinth, seat of the Isthmian Games.⁹ Significantly enough, under the Roman Empire the rôle of the fairs diminished, thanks to the *pax romana*, which guaranteed regular trade sufficient security and facility of transport.¹⁰ But this was only temporary: the barbarian invasions followed.

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, during the "Frankish period," it is known¹¹ that a considerable number of fairs were legally guaranteed and frequented by international merchants; Greeks, Syrians, and Berbers there met Frisians and Saxons. Amongst these fairs the origin of some can be traced to the Roman period; others had their beginnings in the Germanic juridical institutions (*malli* or *placita*); others, the most numerous and important, were established on the occasion of festivals and Christian pilgrimages. The first known fair under this form is that of Saint Denis, near Paris, established by the Frankish monarch in 629 under a charter which was renewed three times in the following century. This fair, which appears to have changed its date in the ninth century, remained for five hundred years one of the centers of European commerce.

⁷ E. C. Biot, transl.: *Le Tcheou-li, ou rites des Tcheou*, 2 vols., Paris, 1851.

⁸ F. K. Movers: *Die Phönizier*, 3 vols (uncompleted), Berlin, 1841-59; reference in Vol. 2, Section 3 (*Handel und Schifffahrt*), pp. 134 *et seq.*

⁹ Huvelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 75 *et seq.* (ancient texts quoted and bibliography); Walford, *op. cit.*, pp. 3 *et seq.*

¹⁰ Huvelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-135.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-176.

Up to the fifteenth century it was the French fairs that played the chief rôle in western Europe. From the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries those of Champagne¹² and Flanders¹³ led in importance. They were regularly frequented by merchants from all parts of Europe and all northern Africa, Palestine and Syria, and Asia Minor. The Italians in particular enjoyed a

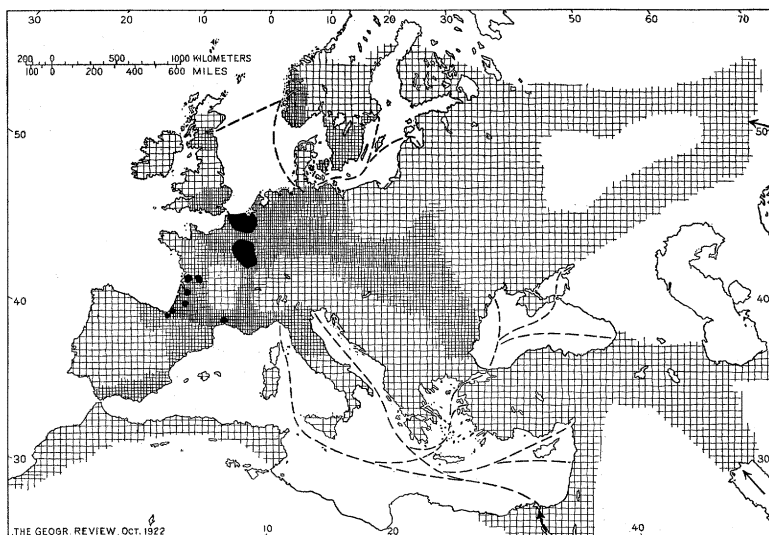


FIG. 2—The economic sphere of the most important commodity fairs of Europe in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries; the fairs of Champagne and Flanders. The large black patches represent the territory over which the fairs were held, Champagne to the south, Flanders to the north. The hachures represent the regions having regular relations with the fairs, the depth of shading corresponding approximately to the degree of relative importance. Broken lines show the principal routes of maritime traffic, and arrows the direction of imports brought from the Far East (a) by Arab navigators, (b) by Russo-Chinese caravans.

notable share of the business of the fair, sharing the monopoly in banking operations with the Jews. They were also great importers of eastern goods bought by Genoese and Venetian mariners from Arab traders or Russian caravans on the shores of the Black Sea and the Nile delta. One of the characteristics of these two great fairs was that they were not held at single centers: they may be described as constellations of fairs. Those of Champagne were held in four towns, Provins, Troyes, Bar-sur-Aube, and Lagny-sur-Marne; those of Flanders in several places but more particularly at Thourout, Bruges, Ypres, Lille, and later at Ghent and Antwerp. The chief advantage of this subdivision was that, passing on from one center to another, the fairs were distributed throughout the year and thus in fact constituted a permanent market.

¹² Félix Bourquelot: *Études sur les foires de Champagne*, 2 vols., *Mémoires Présentés . . . à l'Acad. des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, Ser. 2, Vol. 5, Paris, 1865.

¹³ Victor Gaillard: *Essai sur le commerce de la Flandre au moyen-âge: Troisième étude, les foires, Ghent*, 1851.

In the fifteenth century European commerce was shared between two rival fairs, Geneva¹⁴ and Lyons.¹⁵ After long strife Lyons gained the ascendancy and until the middle of the sixteenth century held unquestioned supremacy among the fairs of Christendom. The Lyons fair was held for the period of a fortnight four times a year—in January, at Easter, in August, and

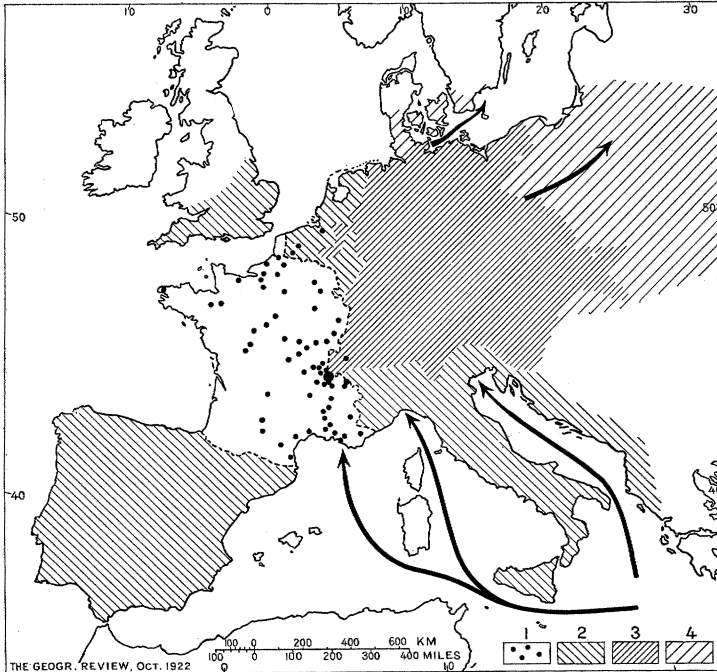


FIG. 3—The economic sphere of the sixteenth-century fair of Lyons. The numbers have reference to the fair: 1, chief industrial towns sending thither merchandise; 2, foreign countries especially interested in import; 3, countries chiefly interested in export; 4, countries of re-exportation. Arrows show direction of importation from the East and re-exportation to northern and eastern Europe.

in November. It was not only the central organ of exchange for the various regions of France but by its location as the point of transit for foreign commerce was a European rather than a French fair. It was through this fair that the products of the Mediterranean and the East were put into general circulation; notably it provisioned the German fairs, which in turn distributed merchandise throughout northern and eastern Europe.

The golden age of the German fairs¹⁶ commenced later, though they have an origin almost as ancient as those of France. Cologne dates from 973, Mainz from 975, Leipzig from 1268. But they only assumed an international

¹⁴ Frédéric Borel: *Les foires de Genève au quinzième siècle*, Geneva and Paris, 1892.

¹⁵ Marc Bréard: *Les foires de Lyon aux XVe et XVIe siècles*, Paris, 1914.

¹⁶ Philippi: *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Statistik der deutschen Messen*, Frankfurt on the Oder, 1858. R. Ehrenberg: *Das Zeitalter der Fugger*, 2 vols., Jena, 1896.

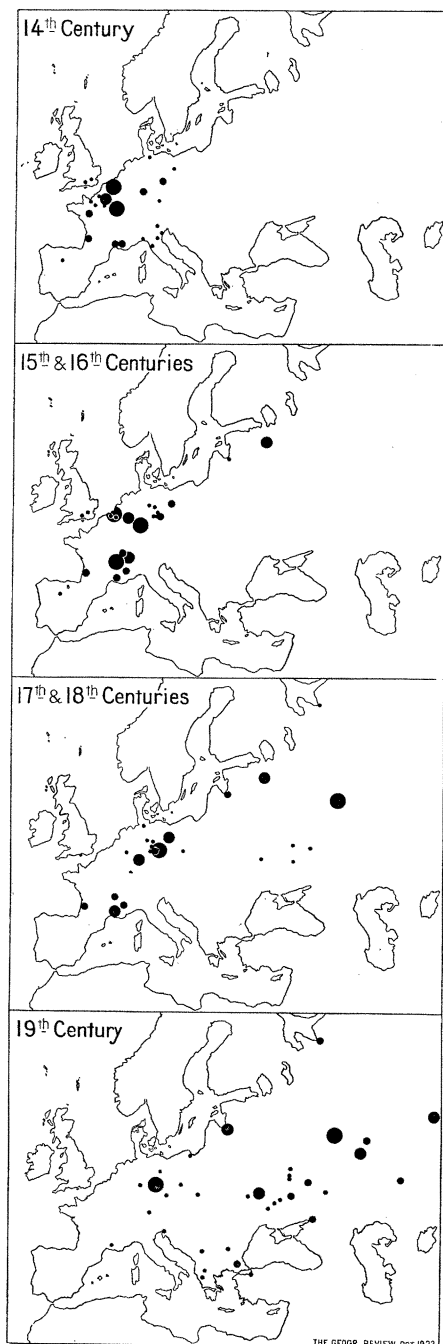


FIG. 4.—The eastward migration of the great commodity fairs of Europe. Circles of four orders of magnitude are used to show approximate importance.

aspect when the religious wars waged in France in the sixteenth century had destroyed the security of that country's fairs; while at the same time the great axes of European trade were displaced from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and the North Sea. During the sixteenth century the preponderant rôle was held by Frankfurt on the Main;¹⁷ after the Thirty Years' War it passed to Leipzig, which kept it until the nineteenth century.¹⁸ After a long period of rivalry the German fairs ended by dividing the year between them as the fairs of Flanders and Champagne had done. A rotation embracing the two fairs of Leipzig, the two fairs of Frankfurt on the Main, the fairs of Naumburg and Frankfurt on the Oder provided a continuous market. However, the business of the German fairs in transit trade and exportation was more limited than that of the old French fairs; as contemporary writers say, they were especially import fairs, *Einfuhrmessen*.

At last, in the nineteenth century, the German fairs declined in their turn, giving place to the Russian fairs. The Russian fairs, which date only from the close of the Middle Ages, began to attract large gatherings in the fifteenth century. The fair of Novgorod the Great then figured as the chief me-

¹⁷ Richard Bettgenhaeuser: *Die Mainz-Frankfurter Marktschiffahrt im Mittelalter* (Leipziger Studien, Vol. 2, No. 1), Leipzig, 1896. Henri Estienne: *Francfordiense emporium, sive francofordienses nundinae*, Geneva, 1574.

¹⁸ Ernst Hasse: *Geschichte der Leipziger Messen*, *Preisschr. Fürstl. Jablonowski'schen Gesell. zu Leipzig*, No. 25, 1885. Philippi: *Die Messen der Stadt Frankfurt an der Oder, Frankfurt on the Oder*, 1877.

dium for the distribution of German merchandise in Russia and Asia and of Asiatic goods in the Russian and the Baltic countries. Fairs had long been held at various points in the debatable ground between Slav and Asiatic. The most important of them seems to have been held since the ninth century in various places, first on the banks of the Volga at the confluence of the Kama and then at Kazan. Finally in the first half of the seventeenth century, owing to the great concourse of pilgrims to the old established monastery of Makariev, the fair was settled at this point, about 40 miles from the confluence of the Oka and Volga, at a date just before the feast of St. Macarius (September 5). In 1817 it was moved to Nijni Novgorod at the actual confluence,¹⁹ where it has flourished up to the present day. It has been customary to hold the fair for four to six weeks a year from the 15th of July (Old Style) to the 25th of August officially and in fact to September 10 (Old Style). It was visited annually by some 200,000 persons and had a turnover of hundreds of millions of rubles (246,000,000, the maximum, in 1881). This famous fair has held an exceptional position as the place of exchange between Europe and Asia. There were brought together all objects of commerce; but cotton goods, skins, furs, and tea from China held the first place. Other well-known Russian fairs include those of Riga, Archangel, Kharkov, and Kiev; and there are numerous Russo-Asiatic fairs in Siberia and Central Asia.

The same epoch that saw the Russian fairs flourish saw also the development of fairs in Asiatic Turkey and the Balkans, where special note may be made of the fair of Usunji in the vilayet of Adrianople which thrived during a quarter of a century.²⁰ Finally it may be observed that in Mecca there still exists a fine example of a fair intimately related to an ancient pilgrimage and to caravan movement. The greater part of the native commerce in Africa also, as in the interior of Asia, is still carried on in the form of commodity fairs, and new ones are still being established.²¹

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMODITY FAIRS: PERIODICITY

Periodicity is the most obvious trait of the commodity fair and that which has been commonly regarded as most fundamental.²² In reality the periodicities of fairs are very diverse, both as regards relative frequency and seasonal occurrence, an indication in itself that this variation is not according to a rigid geographical rule. The most one can say is that fairs of the fine season predominate. Furthermore, there exist instances of non-periodic fairs—such as are held in ports on the arrival of ships. If the port has a con-

¹⁹ V. Vinogradoff: *Les foires*, in M. W. de Kovalevsky: *La Russie à la fin du XIXe siècle*, Paris, 1900, pp. 646 *et seq.* H. P. Kennard: *The Russian Year-book for 1911*, for 1912, etc., London. *Die Messe zu Nishnij-Novgorod*, *Umsatz und Preise in den Jahren 1864-1873*, *Russische Rev.*, Vol. 6, 1875, pp. 34-69, St. Petersburg. H. A. M. Butler-Johnstone: *A Trip up the Volga to the Fair of Nijni-Novgorod*, London, 1875. The question of Russian fairs has been summarized by Édouard Herriot, cited below (footnote 43).

²⁰ Karl Andree: *Geographie des Welthandels*, 3 vols., Stuttgart, 1867-77; reference in Vol. I, pp. 54-176.

²¹ For an example of a present-day establishment of a biennial fair in the Sahara see René Bazin: *Charles de Foucauld, explorateur du Maroc, ermite au Sahara*, Paris, 1921, pp. 377-378.

²² Huvelin, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

siderable size, Marseilles or Bordeaux for example, or if it is the rendezvous of periodic maritime convoys, as the Hispanic-American galleons in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it may become the seat of "maritime fairs" held at fixed times. In some instances combinations of fairs, as we have seen, fill the entire cycle of the year, merchants and merchandise traveling from one to the other. As a matter of fact, periodicity is rather a superficial trait, a convenient device which conceals a characteristic of much more fundamental importance, described more fully below, *the itinerancy of the traders and their merchandise*.

SECURITY OF THE FAIR

The charter of the fair always gave guarantees of and assured the privileges of protection. Merchants proceeding to an international fair obtained a kind of special passport, the "conduct of the fair" (*conduit*), which assured them and their merchandise free passage on certain defined routes and during a prescribed time. The great fairs exercised a sort of jurisdiction along the routes of travel even in foreign countries. The chiefs or wardens of the fairs of Champagne in the thirteenth century intervened on behalf of their merchants in Lorraine, Provence, and Italy, and obtained satisfaction.

INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAIR

At the fair itself the same guarantees of security were offered by the "peace of the fair." Under its aegis commercial transactions were carried on even by merchants of enemy nations. Currency of all nations was in circulation; there was a money exchange and even rudimentary forms of money-order clearing. Generally each nation had its warehouses and inns, just as may be seen today in the *fonduks* of the countries of Arab speech.

In every epoch it was the fairs of the frontiers that flourished best. Those of Champagne near the Flemish border declined when independent Champagne became French, losing its character of a neutral country. Those of Lyons owed their success to proximity to the Swiss and Italian frontiers. This circumstance was indeed taken up as a matter of reproach by their rivals, and an attempt was made to remove the fair to central France, at Tours; but the attempt failed, and the fair returned to Lyons. Like happenings occurred in the history of the fairs of Frankfurt on the Main and Leipzig, and the triumph of Nijni Novgorod over Novgorod the Great is to be explained by the nearness of the former to Asia. In this last instance we return to a highly perfected form of our original frontier commerce, to the origin of the commodity fair and one of its most distinctive traits surpassed in importance only by its essential nomadism.

THE TRAVELING MERCHANT AND THE FAIR

To maintain his business uninterruptedly the merchant trader had to travel from fair to fair. He was able to do this by the combination of the

dates and rhythms of the various fairs—this indeed is the chief significance of their periodicity. In the thirteenth century, for instance, the same merchant might be found traveling in Champagne, Flanders, Spain, Italy, and Germany. He carried along with him merchandise bought and sold in the course of his journeys in the measure of his particular interests; he played in some degree a rôle analogous to that of the tramp ship on the ocean today. Sometimes, in consequence of developments in local or general conditions, or because of accidents en route or change of needs, supply would exceed demand, and the fair would be especially favorable to the buyer; sometimes the converse would be the case; but generally, owing to the itinerant character of the trade, supply and demand met. It must, however, be noted that merchandise, in bulk, was transported *before being sold* with the intention of being offered for sale, a fact which perhaps constitutes the chief difference with ordinary commerce of today.

In each of the fairs that he visited the itinerant trader met for the most part the same customers, debtors, and creditors. Thus it became customary to designate the fairs as the dates when accounts fell due. Some fairs were established for the express purpose of serving as a financial offset to others; as, for instance, was the case with the fair of Ríoseco in Spain founded in the sixteenth century in correspondence with one of the four fairs of Lyons, the only one which had not its counterpart in Spain. For the trader constrained to travel the year round the fair was naturally the only place for the balancing of accounts. This was, in later years, much the most important function of the fair of Nijni Novgorod.

Finally the fairs themselves are subject to a sort of migration or displacement. In general they do not prosper for long in the same place. A fair such as that of Leipzig, maintained uninterruptedly through eight centuries, is extremely unusual. Some fairs in fact are not fixed at all; that of Besançon, established in the fifteenth century and chiefly frequented by Italian merchants and bankers, was held successively at Poligny in the Jura, Chambéry in the Alps, and Piacenza, Asti, Novi in Italy, and finally near Genoa. This also was the case with the great Russian fair before its settlement at Nijni Novgorod as has been described above. The fair is only accidentally connected with a town and because it finds there temporary advantage. An organ of itinerant trade, its fate is in no wise related to that of the fixed organism, the town.

LOCATION OF FAIRS

It is unnecessary to dwell on the fact that the great fairs have succeeded because of their situation on great highways of communication. A map showing a country's fairs at the time of their apogee will show them on the great trade routes of the time. Every fair had its sphere of influence on the borders of which it came in contact with other fairs, and the history of fairs is full of reciprocal encroachments. From the strife between rivals would arise for a time fairs of the first magnitude that in turn would be

supplanted by others, in part from geographical causes but also from political and social developments—changes of boundary or of political régime or diversion of trade currents. Each case requires individual analysis.

Sites of fairs chosen exclusively for reasons of a sentimental order, for example pilgrimages and holy places, are generally inferior to those selected for reasons of material advantage; yet there are instances where the influx of pilgrims constitutes a commercial advantage in itself and where it has made the fortune of an otherwise ill-favored place. Such is more particularly the case in countries where religion figures as a political force—the Mohammedan lands, China, or Christian Europe prior to the Middle Ages.

But ordinarily two classes of circumstances favor the location, for the time being, of the itinerant commerce of the fair. In the first instance selection may be made of the centers of producing regions. Thus the Flemish fairs were essentially the outlet of the seventeen cloth-manufacturing towns which in the Middle Ages made Flanders the first textile region of the continent. The fairs of Lyons assured the sale and provisioning of the industrial centers already scattered over France in the sixteenth century and in particular the two industries then created at Lyons itself, the silk and book trades.

Or again this itinerant trade is fixed for the time being in places of transit and at crossroads especially, as we have seen in frontier regions, for example in Champagne, at Breslau, and the two Frankforts.

When the two circumstances are combined—the producing region and the crossing of great highways—one finds exceptional conditions making the fortune of a Lyons or a Leipzig.

THE FAIR OF KIEV

It also happens that the fair facilitates exchange and intercourse in a region almost purely rural where the inhabitants have no other opportunity for communicating with the outside world. This is the condition which gives rise to the live-stock fairs, but it has also been responsible for the creation of certain commodity fairs or of the two kinds of fairs in combination. A good illustration is afforded by the fair of Kiev, the so-called “contract fair” or, because of the date (February 5 to 25), the fair of the Purification. There transactions are carried on in cash or in terms of the products of the region—grain, sugar, alcohol, coal, metals; the affairs of the sugar industry are settled for the year; contracts are made for agricultural labor and for the sale and renting of land. It is at one and the same time a local, rural and industrial, and an international fair at which is made historic contact between the Mediterranean and the Slav regions.

CONNECTION BETWEEN FAIRS AND TOWNS

Fairs also develop as a natural consequence of nomadism in countries where that is the normal form of life. It may be that no town exists and

the fair is held in the open country. It may be, as at Timbuktu, that the town is only an isolated point of fixed habitation around which centers the nomad life. In such circumstances, and especially in the last instance, fairs may give rise to fixed centers of population or encourage their growth to a marked degree. A town such as Nijni Novgorod which owes everything to its fair and lives almost entirely for it is an exception. When there is superposition of a fair and a town the two institutions are entirely distinct: even at Nijni Novgorod this is true. The fair is a supplementary

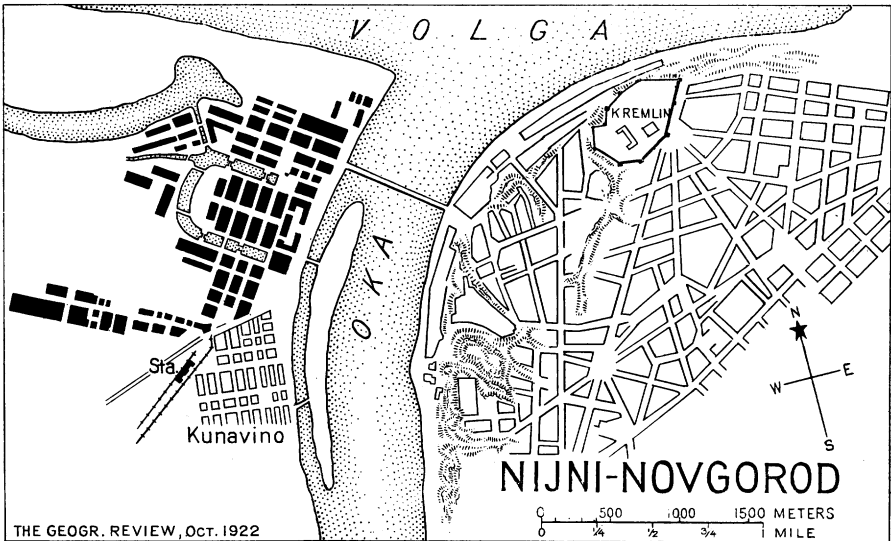


FIG. 5—Nijni Novgorod, the town and the fair. The ground to the east of the permanent buildings of the fair is covered with temporary structures during the period of the fair; the (wooden) bridge across the Oka is also temporary. For a view of town and fair see Figure 3 illustrating the article, "The Economic Resources of the Russian Empire," by E. K. Reynolds, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 1, 1916, p. 254.

town, a parasite in a certain sense, sometimes incorporated in the fixed town for the time but more often existing in juxtaposition. The administration is not the same; the laws of government are different. There is a sort of "right of the fair" to which there is nothing corresponding in the town. A merchant from the town who wishes to engage in trade in the fair must carry thither his goods, and he has no advantage over the stranger.²³

Furthermore, the fair has its own installations varying greatly in appearance according to the country and time to which they pertain. It may possess edifices of stone although they are only used intermittently, as at Nijni Novgorod where such buildings have a frontage of 1,800 meters, or the ancient halls, *halles*, of the Geneva fairs. There merchants are generally grouped according to commodities, as is done in the *suks* of the Mohammedan towns. In other cases the fair is only a temporary camp hastily erected

²³ Bourquelot, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 77 and 324; Vol. 2, pp. 253 *et seq.* Borel, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Brésard, *op. cit.*, pp. 112 *et seq.* Huvelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 81.

on the eve of its opening on the "fair ground." Then it is composed of tents and huts, such as, for instance, were ranged along the banks of the Saône for the ancient fair of Lyons. On the other hand, the fair may be held in town buildings, public as well as private, as for the most part in the fairs of Flanders, Champagne, and Germany, notably at Leipzig. Or, yet again, the three forms may exist in combination, as happens more particularly in the case of well-to-do fairs.

The fair also has its own personnel and administration. It has its special police and judges, distinct from those of the town, who settle disputes according to the custom of the fair, not of the town. Money dealers, "bankers in the fair," who are not interested in business in the town, regulate the money exchange and the mechanism of credit. Up to our own days the great European banks have been represented in Nijni Novgorod only during the time of the fair. Finally, there is a host of brokers and middlemen whose special business is as old as that of the fair and is rendered necessary by its international character. They are licensed agents holding a legal status whose business is entirely separated from that of the town. A tradition of probity attaches to their transactions, which are carried on with a minimum of written guarantee, often by word of mouth alone. This characteristic is clearly indicated in the fairs of ancient Greece, and one sees it today among the cattle brokers of the fairs of western Europe. Obviously it is a trait of itinerant commerce which cannot be embarrassed with papers and procedures and must live on trust.²⁴

These facts explain clearly why great fairs have often been long associated with small towns. This was the case at Beaucaire in southern France near the mouth of the Rhone, at the door of the commercial world of the Mediterranean and the Orient, and similarly at Briançon, the frontier town of the French Alps (altitude 1,326 meters) on the great road to Italy.²⁵ It was for long the case with St. Denis, at the doors of Paris. Undoubtedly the town derived some benefit from the fair, but less than is commonly thought. It is the town treasury and the inns that gain the greatest advantage; local trade scarcely profits at all. The fair greatly increases the population, but in a purely momentary fashion. It sometimes happens that a powerful town, well-favored in its site and geographical position, creates a fair to add to its renown. Such is the case of Lyons; but the origin of the fair is dissociated from that of the town which gave it birth. The fair is of a nature entirely different from that of the town with which it has only superficial relations.

DECLINE OF THE COMMODITY FAIRS

In the measure in which material civilization perfects means of exchange and communications and assures the commercial world increasing security,

²⁴ Huvelin, *op. cit.*, p. 74, note 5; André Allix; La foire de Goncelin, *Recueil des Trav. de l'Inst. de Géogr. Alpine*, Vol. 2, 1914, pp. 299-334.

²⁵ Henry Petiot; Briançon: Esquisse de géographie urbaine, *Rev. de Géogr. Alpine*, Vol. 9, 1921, pp. 341-456. Grenoble.

the conditions which rendered necessary the expedient of the commodity fair progressively disappear, and the fairs must decline or suffer transformation. We have, for instance, a contemporary example in the decline of the fair of Irbit since 1885, the date of construction of the railroad from the Urals. International traders cease to frequent the fairs in person, employing representatives or "factors" and finally abandoning them completely to retail trade. Monetary transactions are carried on more and more by permanent exchanges and clearing houses. Merchandise is shipped only on order; sales are made on sample, and it is no longer necessary for buyers and sellers to meet before the actual goods. The system of fairs is superseded for wholesale trade. Large-scale commerce has become rooted in permanent centers between which in all directions and at all seasons travel individuals, samples, and uninterrupted currents of correspondence and goods.

Yet the immediate effect of this fixation of commerce is not to diminish the *number* of fairs. On the contrary, as their importance declines their number increases. As the great international fairs disappear, little local fairs arise; in the last two centuries France has been sprinkled over with them, but many have only an ephemeral existence. They tend to degenerate into mere periodic amusements. Thus over the greater part of France the popular merrymakings whose commercial rôle is practically *nil* still bear the name of fairs.

While waiting for modern means of communication to penetrate to the corners of the country the "superannuated medium"²⁶ of the fair may, however, still find justification in turning from general to local trade. But even under this form it is condemned to disappear sooner or later except as it may survive by adaptation to certain specific categories of trade. Thus is transition made to specialty fairs.

SPECIALTY FAIRS

Certain decadent fairs long preserved a national or international rôle for certain forms of exchange. Some retained simply a financial function, liquidating accounts incurred elsewhere, as was the case with the vagrant fair of Besançon mentioned above: it was also one of the aspects of the fair of Leipzig in its period of decline, at least as regards the book trade. In other cases the degenerate fairs deal only with special articles of commerce produced or collected in their region; such were the ancient fairs of Caen in Normandy, which sold nothing but linen; those of Leipzig thirty years ago, which then specialized almost exclusively in furs and books. One might also mention the Polish fair of hops in Warsaw (September 13-17), the fish, oil, and down fair of Archangel, the fair of fats at Ischin in the government of Tobolsk. Specialty fairs can maintain themselves for a long time; in a quarter of Paris there is still held about Easter the "Old Iron Fair," or "Ham Fair," as it is also known from the featuring of that product in addition to old metal goods. The "Gingerbread Fair" is another popular old survival.

²⁶ "Intermédiaire suranné" according to the expression of M. Herriot (see footnote 43).

Specialization is particularly adapted to commerce in the rarer commodities for which there is a seasonal sale and which cannot be bought by sample. Furs, products of a typically nomadic occupation, offer a good instance in point. Until recently fur dealers frequented the Russian and Asiatic fairs, and such fairs as that of Irbit still do an important business in furs. Furthermore, the big fur markets of Europe and the newly established fur sales of New York and St. Louis²⁷ have the essential characteristics of the fair. In France a fair of small common furs is still held in the Jura towards the end of winter. Before the opening of the Suez Canal the teas of China, the commerce in which was related to the caravan trade in Central Asia, were largely sold at the Russian fairs, especially that of Nijni Novgorod. There is, however, one product which lends itself in a peculiar degree to the conditions of sale offered in the fair; this is live stock, and the stock fair still flourishes in western Europe.

Live-Stock Fairs

Many fairs that today deal only in cattle figured as commodity fairs two or three centuries ago. This fact is definitely known in certain instances; for example in France at Guibray (a suburb of Falaise) in Normandy, Autun, and Briançon.²⁸ Yet it must not be concluded that the present fair is a direct derivative of the old fair. In the instances cited the commodity fair with a more extended sphere of influence and greater variety and historic prestige has simply masked the contemporary existence of the cattle fair, though the latter in fact is probably still more ancient. This appears to be true as a general rule. Though the two forms may coexist they pertain to two different orders of conditions and, as will be shown, are fundamentally distinct.²⁹ There appear to be cases where in the same town at the same epoch separate cattle fairs and merchandise fairs have been held at different dates. Thus at Grenoble there is today an amusement fair held twice a year, for fifteen days each at Easter and in August, which twenty years ago was a little commodity fair. A cattle fair is held in the same town but in a different location and on different occasions. No trace of any connection between these two kinds of fairs is to be seen today. In the twelfth-century fairs of Champagne there was held once a year along with the general commodity fair a live-stock fair specially devoted to cattle, horses, and mules. In the archives of ancient Dauphiné the writer discovered that in Bourg d'Oisans between Grenoble and Briançon on the road to Italy there were held at fixed times every year about the end of the Middle Ages a general commodity fair and a local live-stock fair.

TOWN AND COUNTRY MARKETS AND LIVE-STOCK FAIRS

Primitive rural industry sells its surplus products intermittently, for the countryman who is occupied the greater part of his time on the land has

²⁷ See note on "Recent Growth of the Fur Trade in the United States," *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 5, 1918, p. 145.

²⁸ Petiot, *op. cit.*

²⁹ J. G. Bulliot: La foire de Bibracte, *Mémoires Soc. Éduenne*, Vol. 7 (N. S.), 1878, pp. 1-82. Autun.

little time to devote to commercial transactions. By its nature, too, agricultural exploitation imposes intermittency on commercial gatherings, which for reasons of convenience are most often made periodic. The rôle of the fairs of Kiev in rural commerce has already been cited. Where a sedentary agricultural population is concerned, these gatherings can be held at frequent intervals; the interval will be modified if an element of pastoral nomadism is introduced. Thus according to the progression of the seasons and the movements of the herds these gatherings attain a particular importance at certain seasons of the year. The best field for the present study of this phenomenon is furnished by the Islamic countries, notably of northern Africa where, as Jules Blache has recently shown, sedentary agriculture and pastoral nomadism³⁰ almost everywhere exist side by side. There the places where the country folk foregather bear the names of the days of the week and in succession provide for all the countryside.

Such rural gatherings, at the beginning held almost always in the open country, tend to become fixed centers of habitation. It is a commonplace that one of the reasons determining urban settlement is the concentration of agricultural exchange in the form of a "country market." But, in the measure that the town thus created develops, it begins to acquire its own proper functions. It ends by itself absorbing all the country products for which it has been the seat of exchange. Thus arises the city market without which the city cannot live. Zola gives us the study of a formidable contemporary example in "Le Ventre de Paris." Each city is surrounded by an area more or less extensive whose activities are almost exclusively devoted to supplying its sustenance, a fundamental element in any study of urban geography.³¹

Under the form of the city market rural commerce has only the most distant connection with fairs. In most of the towns of Europe markets and fairs are entirely separate and distinct phenomena, though, as we have remarked, they have a community of origin in the periodic gathering for the disposal of surplus agricultural produce. The market is closely bound to the town which it serves; the fair has only relations of tradition or convenience; it does not function for the town's sake, only for the surrounding country.

The distinction that we make would perhaps seem to be factitious did there not exist examples of the initial juxtaposition of market and cattle fairs in the same town and before their dissociation. There is the instance of the majority of the Islamic towns where, as we have said, the introduction of live stock at certain dates—which constitutes the fair properly speaking—heightens the activity of the market. Best of all is this demonstrated in ancient Rome.³² There from the earliest times were held periodic country markets, *nundinae*, so called because held every nine days. The *nundinae*

³⁰ Jules Blache: *Modes of Life in the Moroccan Countryside: Interpretations of Aerial Photographs*, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. II, 1921, pp. 477-502.

³¹ Cf. Raoul Blanchard: *Grenoble: Étude de géographie urbaine*, 2nd edit., Paris, 1912.

³² At Rome there were besides the *nundinae* fairs (*mercatus*) properly so called which were held biennially. They were associated with religious festivals; but their importance was completely eclipsed by that of the *nundinae*, which in fact really usurped the rôles of the cattle fairs and commodity fairs. (Huvelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-99.)

not only provided a sustenance market for the city; they also acted as the center of the cattle trade of Latium. The regulation of the market, its special juridical features, its locus in the city where each class of merchandise was sold in its proper quarter³³ are all features containing in germ the geographical characteristics of the live-stock fair as we shall analyze it later. As in the cattle fairs, there was added a minor trade in various small wares; and this at certain epochs seems to have developed into a veritable little commodity fair. In the Middle Ages, in fact, the term *nundinae* was currently used to designate the fairs for the sale of both merchandise and cattle;

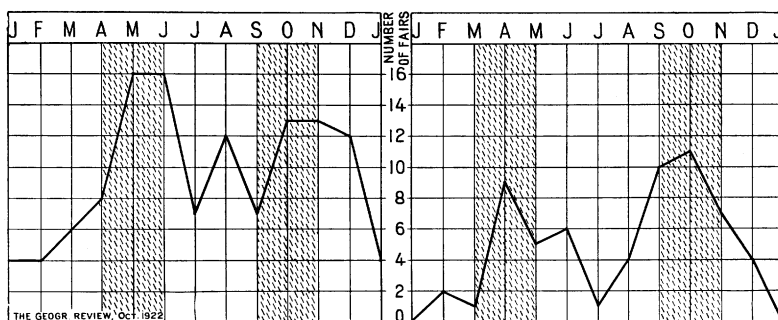


FIG. 6—Graphs showing the rhythm of country fairs in two regions of the western Alps; on the left in the *département* of Isère (from data by A. Allix), on the right in the region of Pinerolo, Italy (from data by G. B. Roletto). Months when the herds are moved to and from the upland pastures are shown by shading.

it was more frequently employed than *feriae*. The Roman *nundinae*, then, were a kind of combination of the three commercial institutions, the market, the cattle fair, and the commodity fair.

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STOCK FAIRS AND PASTORAL LIFE

The pastoral industry is of all forms of exploitation of the earth that which most imperiously exacts movement from place to place, that is to say nomadism. Now it is exceptional that nomadism is purely capricious. Almost everywhere it takes place within definite limits, more or less extensive, and brings the herds and their guardians to definite places at fixed times. There are in Central Asia and the Sahara examples of pastoral nomadism of very long period, in the mathematical sense; in Europe today the periods, the distances, the forms even of this nomadism are infinitely varied; but it always exists in more or less definite form.³⁴

³³ The division into commercial quarters or *suks*, under diverse forms is classic in the towns of the Middle Ages and today in the towns of Islam. At Rome there was the *forum boarium*, the *forum pecuarium*, *suarium*, *pistorium*, *vinarium*, *olitorium*, *piscatorium*, *cuppedinarium*, etc. Compare the localization in the commodity fairs and in the cattle fairs and sample fairs of today (discussed below).

³⁴ For various local examples in various countries see André Fribourg: La transhumance en Espagne, *Ann. de Géogr.*, Vol. 19, 1910, pp. 231-244; Philippe Arbos: La vie pastorale dans les Alpes Françaises, Grenoble and Paris, 1922; René Musset: The Geographical Characteristics of Western France, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 12, 1922, pp. 84-99. From this point of view a special interest attaches to the last work cited, for it instances, in a non-mountainous region and under present-day conditions, the migrations of live stock to great distances in response to present physical necessities as much as to custom.

Without exception the rhythm of pastoral nomadism is governed by the rhythm of the seasons. The manner of adaptation to the seasons varies, but it is always nature which commands. Pastoral movements are much more rigorously controlled than those commodity movements of which we have spoken under commodity fairs. For the one it is a simple convenience, for the other a necessity.

In pastoral nomadism the fair appears as an element of permanence. Accustomed to pass at fixed intervals in the neighborhood of the same points, the driver of a herd knows that he will meet there drivers of neighboring herds. The meeting provides a temporary arrest of nomadism. It permits the exchange of animals, the making of contracts for the engagement of herdsmen, for the combination and composition of the herds, and for the sale of pastoral produce. Thither come also those people from the exterior who wish to buy cattle. The cattle fair is the rendezvous for the butchers

of the towns, sedentary cultivators who wish to lease cattle, cattle dealers. For the industry of the pastoral region it is the sole commercial outlet; and for the exterior the sole economic contact with the pastoral region. For the pastoral people it is, furthermore, the opportunity to buy other products of which they have need. It is for this reason that the cattle fair is almost always accompanied by the sale of a certain amount of general merchandise and is attended by a host of itinerant retail traders. Sometimes these are merchants with an established place of business who take advantage of a near-by fair, but most often they devote themselves solely to itinerant trade,

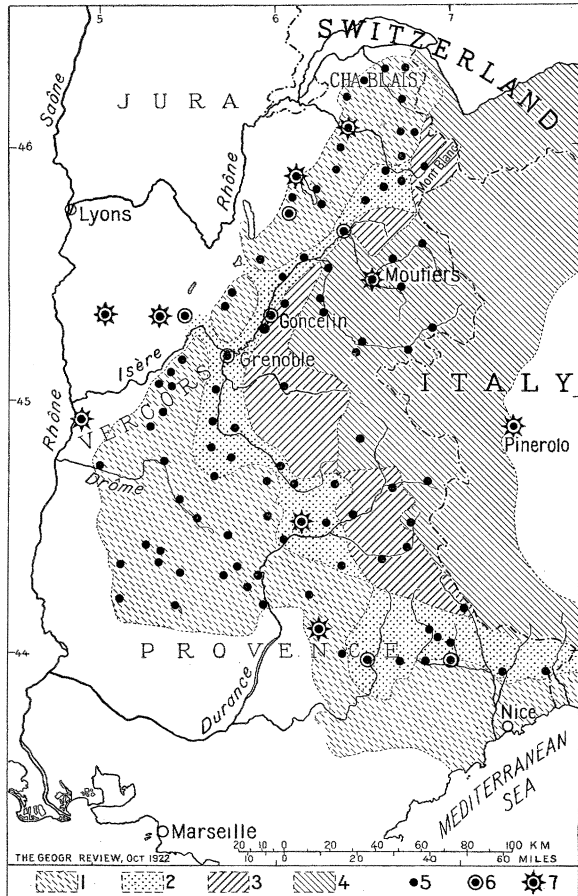


FIG. 7—Live-stock fairs of the French Alps (chiefly after Ph. Arbos). The numbers have reference: 1-4, natural regions; 1, pre-Alps; 2, sub-alpine depression; 3, central massifs; 4, intra-alpine zone; 5, fairs; 6, especially important fairs; 7, the great fairs exporting outside the Alps.

passing continually from one fair to another over the entire region. In this humble form alone does the cattle fair resemble the commodity fair and exceptionally is a degenerate derivative from it. Between the rhythm of the fairs and that of pastoral nomadism is an indissoluble connection. An attempt to change the traditional dates of fairs at the time of the French Revolution had quickly to be abandoned. However, in some non-mountainous regions where pastoral nomadism does not exist today there are fairs without apparent seasonal connection. For example in the Garonne basin fairs are generally held once a month. But even here the Spring and Autumn fairs if not more numerous are far more important as far as live stock is concerned.

LIVE-STOCK FAIRS IN THE WESTERN ALPS

It is from the western Alps that we shall select some present-day examples of live-stock fairs. It is true that this region is not the only one in the Old World where the institution keeps its importance nor even that where it is most widely developed or most generally known, but it is here perhaps that pastoral nomadism is most characteristically defined and presents the clearest relations with the mechanism of the fairs (Fig. 7). Furthermore it is the only one in which the requisite geographic studies have been carried out in detail. The following discussion will be in essence a résumé from three recent works—on the pastoral life of the French Alps as a whole by Philippe Arbos,³⁵ on the French fair of Goncelin by the author of the present article,³⁶ and on the Italian fair of Pinerolo by G. B. Roletto.³⁷

We have already remarked on the close connection between the monthly frequency of the live-stock fairs and the movements of the herds (Fig. 6). In the winter the stabled animals are fed on hay gathered during the preceding season. For the cattle industry this was long a dead season during which the animals were merely kept alive and from which they emerged in great need of fattening on fresh pastures. Great progress has been made in recent years, however, in stall feeding; and it is not uncommon for animals at the end of the winter to be ready for immediate sale. It is in regions where this stall feeding is practiced that the fairs are held the earliest—even before Easter.

In spring the herds are made up to go to the “mountain” or “alp” for the warm season—a business for which the fairs are an almost indispensable medium since the owners must place in common keeping their beasts and their interests. In general this is the period when fairs are most numerous. In the southern section of the Alps, the sheep country, where spring is earlier, the time of the greatest number of fairs is April; in the northern Alps, the cow country, it is May and June.

While the herds are summering on the mountain—“les montagnes sont garnies”—there is a diminution in the number of fairs, especially in the sheep

³⁵ See footnote 34.

³⁶ See footnote 24.

³⁷ Le condizioni geografiche delle fiere di Pinerolo, *La Geografia*, Vol. 9, 1921, pp. 99-135.



FIG. 8

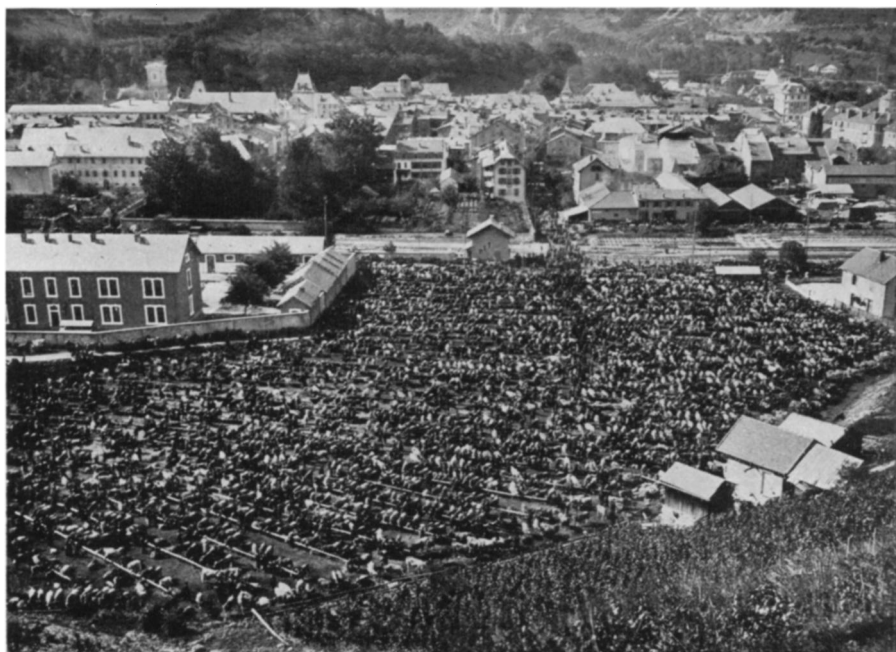


FIG. 9

FIG. 8—The live-stock fair of Autun, Central Massif. (Photograph by courtesy of E. Guignard.)
 FIG. 9—The September live-stock fair of Montiers-en-Tarentaise, Savoie. (Photograph by Raoul Blanchard, reproduced from Fig. 27, in Ph. Arbos: *La vie pastorale dans les Alpes françaises*.)

country. In the cow country summer fairs are held for the sale of dairy produce, the chief agricultural wealth of the Alps. Sale of cheeses is the more necessary as that product is the common currency with which communes or individual proprietors are paid the rent of the mountain pasturages.

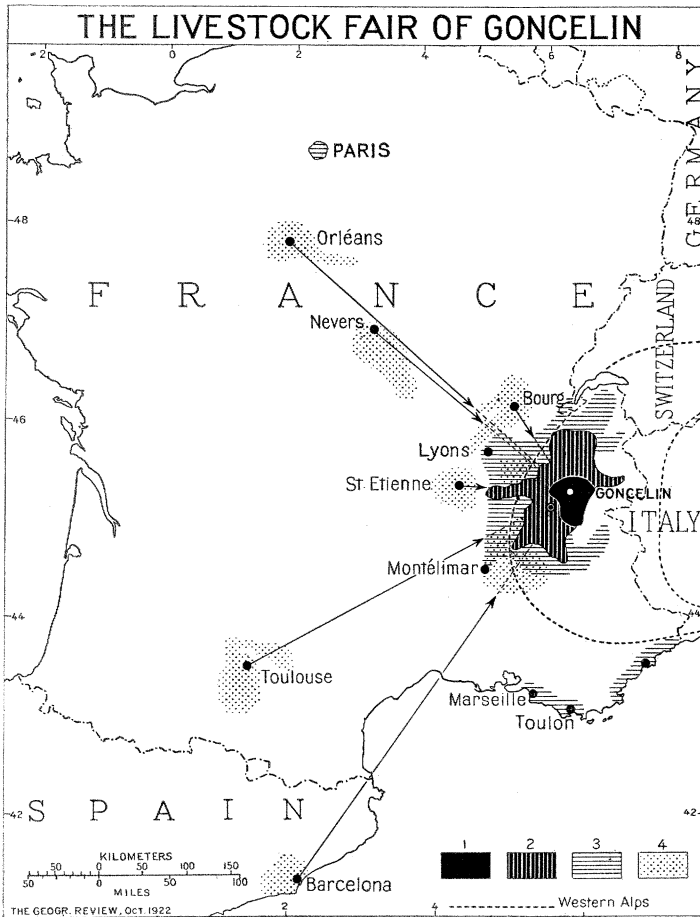


FIG. 10—The economic sphere of the live-stock fair of Goncein. The numbers have reference: 1, economic domain, or *umland* of the fair; 2 and 3, regions supplied by the fair with cattle and sheep—2, regions regularly supplied by direct exportation (the circle herein is Grenoble); 3, regions supplied irregularly and by the intermediary of other fairs (re-exportation); 4, regions supplying the fair's import of pigs.

In autumn, sometimes from the end of August, the beasts begin to descend well-conditioned for slaughter; it is again a period when fairs are particularly numerous for the pastoral folks then wish to liquidate the expenses of the summer period and realize their profits. The fairs of this season are in general the most important of the year. At the big Savoyard fair of Moutiers-en-Tarentaise, for example, some 4,000 to 6,000 head of cattle are

assembled each September (Fig. 9). The season terminates in October or November in the warmer regions of the south by some big sheep fairs before the period of winter stabling is begun or the winter migration of sheep takes place towards the sunnier regions of Provence.

Figure 7 shows all the centers of the French Alps where live-stock fairs are held at least four times a year or where they have a recognized importance. It will be noted that they are ranged in the largest number among the chief highways traced by nature and the roads leading to the great Alpine passes; then in the natural regions³⁸ whose own products play an accessory part in the trade of the fairs (the rich agricultural country of the sub-alpine depression; and Vercors and Chablais, regions producing breeds suitable for the mountain); then the great valleys of the intra-alpine zone, the country *par excellence* of summer pasture outside the Alps. In all these regions the herds still travel on the hoof for the most part, the railroad is only used for exportation outside the Alps. In this respect the entire country of the French Alps presents the characteristics of an economic unit.

TWO EXAMPLES IN DETAIL: THE FAIRS OF GONCELIN AND PINEROLO

The great fair of Gresivaudan, held at Goncelin probably from the end of the Middle Ages, is the pastoral center of a little economic domain in the interior of the French Alps. We say advisedly the fair and not the town of Goncelin; for the town has no connection with the pastoral business other than to give asylum eighteen times a year to the gathering of stock raisers and their beasts, the cattle dealers, and the itinerant retail merchants. The fair is held every Saturday in May and June, on the 10th and the 25th of August, and again every Saturday in November and December. In regard to its economic domain the rôle of the fair is triple. First it centralizes the exchanges made in the interior. The beasts here pass from one owner to another, and here are drawn up contracts for summering and for rent of the mountain pastures. In the second place, the fair concentrates the animals destined for exportation outside the region. And thirdly, and this aspect is perhaps a little unexpected, it is a medium of importation for the region. There is, in fact, one kind of live stock that the region does not raise but which it consumes in quantity, that is the pig. Every countryman fattens one or two pigs for home consumption, but he buys the animals young at the fair, and should he have more than he needs he sells his surplus there. This rôle of importer and exporter is analogous to that played by a port in respect of its *hinterland*; and it was this fact that led the author in 1914 to propose the term *umland* to designate the economic domain of the fair.³⁹

We now turn to the fair of Pinerolo, of which M. Roletto has given us an

³⁸ See Raoul Blanchard: The Natural Regions of the French Alps, *Geogr. Rev.*, Vol. 11, 1921, pp. 31-49.

³⁹ M. Roletto (*op. cit.*, p. 134) does not see the necessity for this new term and prefers "economic domain," which, however, is not only longer but less precise; *umland* has specific reference to the commercial balance of exchange with the exterior and with it is associated the idea of "land" port.

excellent picture in his thoroughgoing study. Pinerolo is situated where one of the most important systems of converging valleys of the Piedmontese Alps opens on to the plain. One of these valleys, the Val Cluson, is the age-old route from the Piedmont to Dauphiné by the pass of Mont Genève, and Pinerolo was up to the nineteenth century a point of departure and arrival of international traffic. Towards the mountains the *umland* of the fair is limited by the French frontier and by the crest defining the confluent valleys. On the plain, where there is neither natural barrier nor international boundary, delimitation is less clear; and here the commercial attraction of the great center of Turin makes itself felt in constantly increasing degree.

The fair of Pinerolo, like that of Goncelin, dates from the end of the Middle Ages: its charter was granted in 1433, and it was held for the first time in 1450. It has, however, suffered changes in which may be traced political and economic influences. At the beginning exclusively pastoral, it was held in April and November—spring and autumn fairs of standard type. Later boundary changes increased the sphere of the fair (the change of 1713 was to Italy's advantage; further north, in 1860, a change was made to the profit of France) and led to improvements in the agricultural production of the region, especially on the Piedmont plain; and growth of industry in the town of Pinerolo contributed to its progress. In the nineteenth century the date of the autumn fair was progressively advanced until it ended by being held in August. Today the dates of the fair are the last Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in April; the last Tuesday and Wednesday in August. By a coincidence which is relatively rare the August fair corresponds to the festival of the patron saint of the region. The fair today has a mixed character, agricultural and pastoral, but trade in live stock is dominant. Grains—wheat and maize—are also commercially important; but—and this shows the fundamentally pastoral character of the fair—they are sold at the weekly market with its more limited scope rather than at the fair where the important sales are in cattle, horses, mules, and pigs.

For cattle the fair of Pinerolo plays the part that we have already described in the case of the Goncelin fair; it brings together the stock of the region, regulates the local nomadism, and furnishes export material. The greatest buyer is Turin. For other kinds of stock it functions rather as an importer, for there is no breeding center in the region. Here its sphere extends to the Abruzzi, to Touraine, and to Hungary (Fig. 11). In addition it has a more important rôle as a distributing agent than Goncelin. The pigs imported, like those of Goncelin, are distributed throughout the economic domain; but these limits are considerably passed in the case of horses and mules, in fact it may be said that the entire upper basin of the Po obtains from the fair of Pinerolo its requirement in these animals, the horse for the plains, the mule for the mountains. The spring fair of Pinerolo is perhaps the most important mule fair in northern Italy. Even for cattle the rôle of the fair of Pinerolo appears to surpass that of Goncelin. Within its economic

sphere are other local fairs which effect a preliminary concentration of the cattle destined for sale outside the region. These are then brought to Pinerolo where they are bought by outside dealers who thus are saved the trouble of visiting the local fairs. Pinerolo might be described as a fair of second (or superior) degree, a characteristic which M. Roletto has not pointed out, though it appears to the writer a distinguishing feature. In the French Alps there are several great fairs of the same kind, which collect for

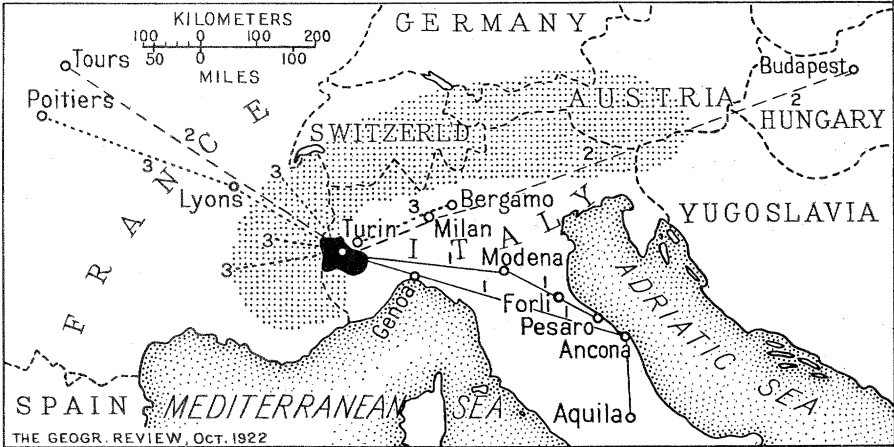


FIG. 11—Map showing the sphere of influence of the fair of Pinerolo, Italian Alps (after G. B. Rolletto). The area of the Alps is approximately indicated by shading; the economic domain of the fair is shown in solid black; the numbered lines show origin of (1) pigs, (2) horses, (3) mules brought to the fair from without the economic domain.

export from the local fairs and are frequented by dealers who supply every section of France.

PRESENT-DAY DECLINE OF THE STOCK FAIRS

At the present time we are witnessing a somewhat rapid transformation of pastoral industry in the Old World. The rhythm of nomadism, while yet respected, is no longer of vital importance. The stable is no more a temporary makeshift but a place for the fattening of stock for the market. In some places the summering on the mountains has been given up altogether, as, for instance, in the humid massifs of the pre-Alps where around each village is plenty of grass for the entire year. Transhumance of the flocks of sheep from Provence to the Alps and vice versa is also on the decline. At the same time the fair whose *raison d'être* is pastoral nomadism is progressively losing its age-old importance.

Live stock has gained in value, is more sought after, and at greater distances and more regularly. The phenomenon is general, but it is very clearly apparent in the French Alps where the introduction of modern means of communication has been relatively late and abrupt. A more extensive

clientele demands a more regular supply, which the system of fairs, essentially intermittent, does not furnish. Purchases are made daily. The fairs, it is true, are sufficiently numerous and uniformly distributed over the entire area of the pastoral country to guarantee at least one at every season of the year, but their inequality in magnitude is unsatisfactory to the dealers; only the big fairs of spring and autumn are adequate in this respect, and at these the competition between buyers is more and more keen.

There is, furthermore, a constantly increasing tendency for the buyers of pastoral products, both stock and dairy produce, to travel the mountains at all seasons and purchase direct from the producers. Live stock and dairy produce bought in such way travel at all seasons by road and rail. As the countryfolk say, trade is done less and less at the fair and more and more "on the road." The buyers seek to get ahead of one another and strive in particular to obtain the best of the stock some days before the fairs. Hence the fairs tend to be neglected both by buyers and producers. There are entire regions where this commercial vehicle, but lately important, has now fallen into complete disuse; as, for instance, is the case with Trièves to the south of Grenoble.⁴⁰

Decline is overtaking the stock fairs of the Old World as it has overtaken the merchandise fairs, but more slowly and more recently. Must one conclude, then, that they too will sooner or later fall into complete decadence? We do not think so. It must be recalled that cattle are bought individually rather than in the bulk. Undoubtedly if buying is done by the entire herd, as is commonly practiced in the New World, direct control at the moment of purchase is as little necessary as in the buying of corn by the sack or coal by carload. But in Europe stock-buying is seldom done this way. Even if reduced to a secondary commercial rôle, the cattle fair must long survive as affording the best way of inspecting all the cattle of a region with a view to purchase. Furthermore, the stock raiser is not a professional trader, as is the cattle dealer, and can give only a limited portion of his time to the business of buying and selling; he will always have need of the fair to meet his neighbors and examine their beasts, and inter-regional exchanges will always be made there for the greater part. The opportunity for intercourse is an important function of some fairs of today; as the people say, one sees there "many people and few beasts."

The diminished element in the fair is the commercial specialist who, carrying on his business over a great area and varying it according to the interest of the moment, escapes the local geographic limitations. Yet it must be observed that he does it only at a price—by constant travel, fatigue, and additional expense. In contrast the stock fairs offer a positive convenience, and it is not impossible that they will survive, at all events for trade in cattle and beasts of burden, because of the economy they effect in movement and effort.

⁴⁰ Charles Robequain: *Le Trièves: Étude géographique*, *Rev. de Géogr. Alpine*, Vol. 10, 1922, pp. 5-126 Grenoble.

It is an attempt to realize a precisely similar economy in trade in general merchandise that has led to the revival of the old system of commodity fairs under the form of sample fairs. The success of this enterprise shows that it corresponds to a real commercial utility, and it is this same utility that, in conjunction with the permanence of geographic factors discussed above, leads the writer to believe if not in the future growth at least in the persistence of the stock fair.

The Sample Fairs

ORIGIN: THE FAIR OF LEIPZIG⁴¹

During the course of the nineteenth century the fair of Leipzig entered on a progressive decline. Towards the end of the century it had become almost entirely specialized in furs and books, with the trade in these tending to desert the fair and become established in permanent quarters in the town. It also had to enter into competition with other fairs of powerful scope held at Berlin.

About 1897 there was taken in the history of the Leipzig fair, and in consequence in the history of international fairs in general, a decisive evolutionary step from which there arose a type of commercial organ adapted to modern life. It was—and the fact is sufficiently rare in geography to merit note—the result of deliberate human initiative, the actual creation of a permanent new fact.

The new tendencies of the Leipzig fair made a tentative appearance in 1890 and were elaborated to definite form in the succeeding six or seven years. The object was to preserve the wholesale trade of the fair and prevent degeneration into a local retail fair, as had happened to its former contemporaries and rivals. Manifestly the old system was incompatible with direct sales in bulk; and the idea of sale with immediate delivery was abandoned. The goods themselves were not brought to the fair; the old-time warehouse of the fair disappeared. Visitors and buyers were offered only *samples* of merchandise; orders were taken to be executed at contracted times; merchandise was dispatched from seller to buyer without passing through the fair. The fair then took on the aspect of an exchange for commercial orders, though temporary and periodic. Broadly advertised, it was also able to draw together interests from a very wide area.

By the circumstances from which it arose the new fair of Leipzig was at the beginning closely connected with the economic life of its immediate surroundings. It called for the exhibition of manufacturers' samples, and the only manufacturers who were directly interested in establishing the new system at Leipzig were those of which the town was the commercial center—Saxony, Thuringia, and Franconia. It was the manufacturers of these three

⁴¹ Léon Arqué: La foire de Leipzig à l'époque actuelle, *La Science Sociale*, June, 1910, pp. 13-96. Paris. Die Technische Messe, Leipzig, 1921. Charles Touzot: Une visite à la foire de Leipzig, automne, 1921 (unpublished archives of the Lyons fair). Personal information. See footnote 43.

regions who at the beginning founded the union of merchants directing the fair, *Verband der Messkaufhäuser*, an association in which the Saxons (but not the people of Leipzig) naturally dominated. These regions produced a variety of products; the metallurgical products of the Erzgebirge, the mechanical constructions, textiles, and industrial products of Chemnitz, Zwickau, and Plauen; the glass and scientific apparatus of Jena; the hardware, edged tools, and light hardware of Franconia and Saxony; the innumerable

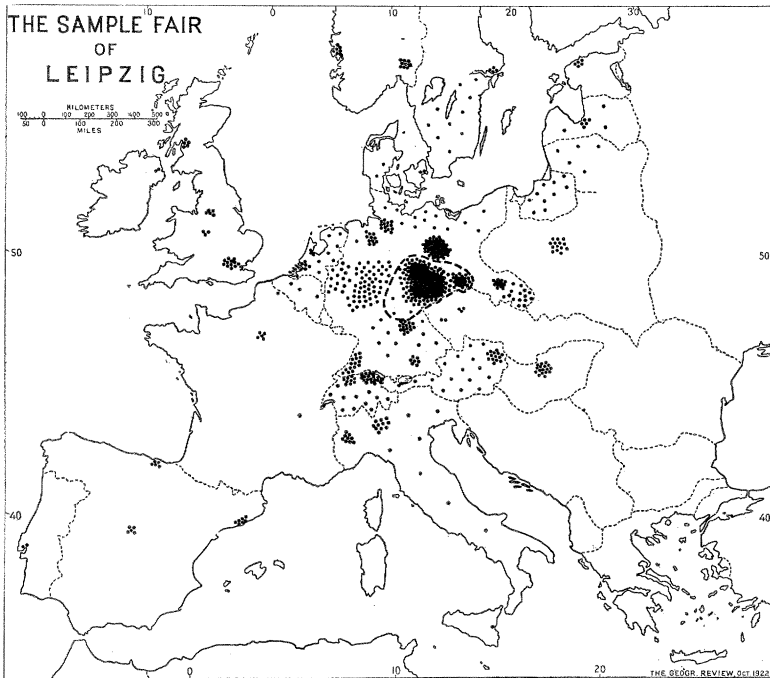


FIG. 12—The economic sphere of the sample fair of Leipzig. The heavy broken line shows the economic domain of the sample fair in its earlier years (1897–1917). Dots represent the point of origin of participants in the fair, each dot representing an average of 5 participants (1914–1922).

wooden products of Thuringia and the Saxon mountains; the basketry, papier-maché, blown glass, and porcelain of Thuringia, etc. Such are the wares that for twenty years have been offered in sample form at the new fair of Leipzig. It must be emphasized that the fair has played its rôle for a limited and well-defined geographical domain (Fig. 12). We may compare it in this respect with the live-stock fairs. Here is a veritable *umland* especially concerned with export, which business the fair facilitates as the fairs of the western Alps facilitate the exportation of cattle. The prime character of the German fair of the Middle Ages is thus reversed; the sample fair of Leipzig is *Ausfuhrmesse*—a fair of exportation, but for a limited *umland*. It should be understood, however, that while this definition is true at present it is not

final and does not exclude the possibilities of development in other directions. Even now it seems that the exhibition of merchandise produced from other more distant regions is an aid to the provisioning of the *umland* with its requirements. And there are indications that a possible function of importation will complete the character of the fair, which will thus conform closely to the definition that we have offered—a sort of inland port⁴² satisfying the import and export needs of its *umland*.

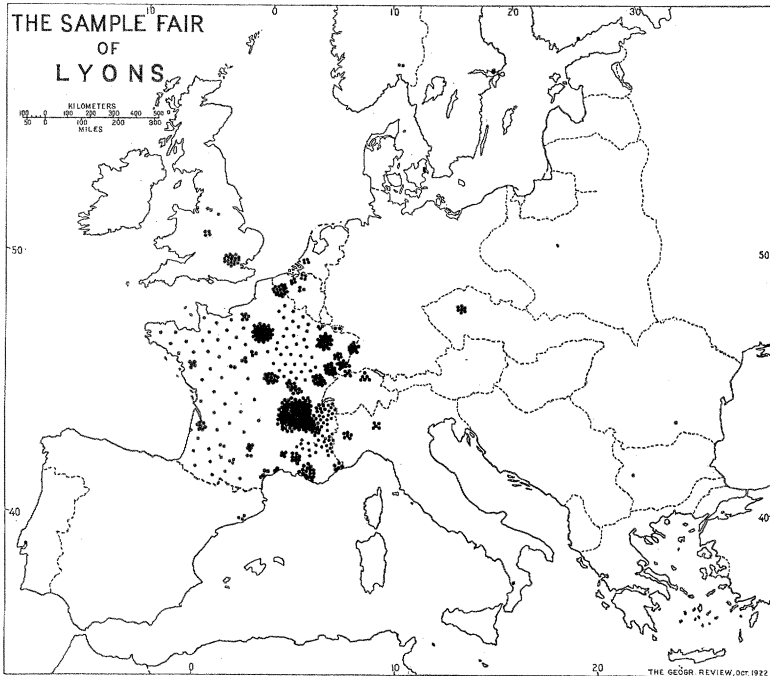


FIG. 13—The economic sphere of the sample fair of Lyons. Dots represent the point of origin of participants in the fair (spring and autumn), each dot representing an average of 5 participants.

However, the *umland* is not everything in the sample fair. It functions for a much broader terrain. From the beginning of the twentieth century, and especially since 1917 when the activities of the new fair of Lyons began to be manifested, that of Leipzig extended its influence to include the whole of Germany. Products from Westphalia appeared, and first the cheap cutlery of Solingen and the cheap jewelry of Pforzheim; then the products of the industries of Silesia and of Berlin, comprising altogether an infinite variety of manufactures in metal, wood, rubber, and chemical goods. For a long time foodstuffs, textiles, raw materials, and colonial products were not admitted to the fair, but they finally made their appearance during the war. In virtue of its character the fair is specially interested in placing new goods

⁴² Arqué (*op. cit.*) expressly compared the fair to an "inland port."

on the market as speedily as possible. This is most peculiarly true of articles that vary according to the mode, and during the war was also the case with innumerable substitutes, *Ersätze*, chiefly in textiles and foodstuffs. Thus the fair became more complex, including all categories of goods and drawing producers and customers from all the territory of the Central Powers. At the beginning of the war and in view of the importance of the fair the *Verband* sought to have it recognized as an activity of the Empire with the participation of the German State, and this was realized at the end of the war. Nothing shows better the special importance of the fair of Leipzig—which in 1915 was attended by more than 20,000 exhibitors and buyers—and also the utility of this new vehicle in the complex commercial life of today.

Before leaving this analysis of the new fair of Leipzig we may recapitulate its basic characteristics. It is held at fixed times, towards Easter and at Michaelmas (end of September). It has a fair ground and special buildings in the center of the town, though the greater number of the exhibitors install themselves with their exhibits in rented chambers and apartments. Yet the fair is not part of the town. The *Verband* controls it, organizes publicity and propaganda, and enters into arrangements with transportation companies and hotels for the concession of special terms. Under a modern form these are the traits which we have seen in the old commodity fairs. One can even see the suggestion of a revival of the old "conduct of the fair" in the tickets, or certificates, issued to participants in the fair granting special advantages. During the war these tickets served, especially for foreigners, as veritable "safe-conducts." Again it may be compared with the *suks* in the localization on the ground of the various products exhibited; and foreigners, Swiss, Swedes, Dutch, etc., have their clubs and clubhouses which recall the old *fonduks*.

It is true that the chamber of commerce and the municipality play an important part in the administration of the fair, and it is evident that the town benefits from it and is interested in seeing it prosper. But we must again insist on the separation of the two things, the fair and the town. There is no absolute geographic bond between them. The fair lives for itself. Tradition, the skill of the directors, good organization, and especially the address that evolved the new form are the real reasons for the actual location of the fair. At the time of the fair the activity of the town is intensified, concerts and entertainments naturally gain with the increased population and are then most brilliant. Streets are decorated, processions parade the town, bands at their head; but, let us note, under this appearance of festivity it is always the interests of the fair and the fair alone that are considered. All these parades and merrymakings have but one object—publicity for such and such products offered at the fair. Trade in the town benefits by the influx of sightseers; but the administration of the fair is properly concerned with limiting their numbers; its interest here is just precisely contrary to that of the town. Only accredited business men are permitted to visit the

fair, and to do so they must show a badge for which they pay 20 marks—one of the sources of revenue of the fair.

THE NEW FAIR OF LYONS

The second great sample fair of Europe which is considerably younger than that of Leipzig was directly inspired by it. The Lyons fair had its inception in a suggestion made in 1915 and promptly taken up and put into effect by M. Édouard Herriot, mayor of the city.⁴³ The first sample fair of Lyons was held March 1, 1916, with the intention of making it an annual

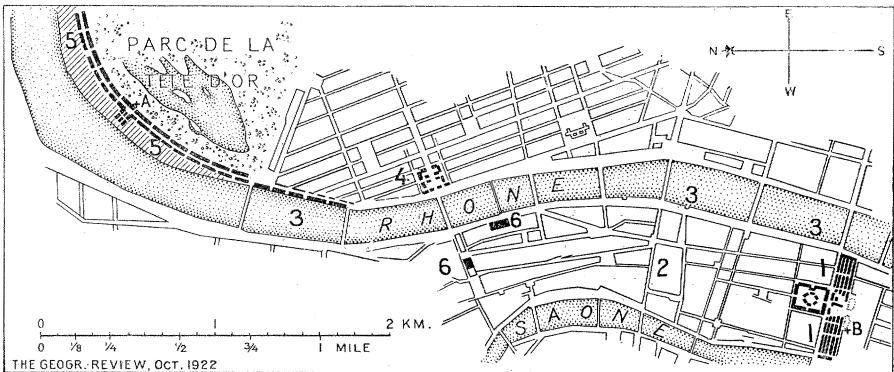


FIG. 14—Lyons, a part of the town and the sample fair. Numbers have reference as follows: 1 and 4, temporary wooden structures erected on public squares; 2, square occupied by a part of the fair in 1919; 3, quays occupied by a part of the fair in 1916, 1917, and 1918; 5, future fair palace—solid black showing part constructed in 1921; shaded, the part to be constructed from 1921 to 1930; 6, the permanent offices and exhibition of the fair. A indicates the viewpoint of the photograph Figure 16; B, that of Figure 15.

event. Such was the rapidity of its development, however, that from the beginning of 1919 it was necessary to make it a biennial event, and it is now held March 15 and October 15. Its success is manifested in the figures of the financial transactions accomplished therein; 95,000,000 francs in 1916; 410,000,000 in 1917; 1,035,000,000 in 1919; 953,000,000 in 1920. All kinds of merchandise are accepted under sample form. It may be noted, however, that the category of exhibitors is confined to direct producers and exceptionally to importers and wholesale merchants, unlike the Leipzig fair, which admits all classes of middlemen. Thus is explained the difference in the figures of participants for a commercial importance sensibly the same.

In 1918⁴⁴ the classes of merchandise sold through the medium of the fair were, in order of value, out of a total of 750,000,000 francs: cotton goods

⁴³ Édouard Herriot: Une offensive économique, la foire d'échantillons de Lyon, *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, Vol. 32, 1916, pp. 758-787; René Hoffherr: La politique d'une foire d'échantillons: La foire de Lyon, Lyons, 1922; C. Germain de Montauzan: La foire d'échantillons, Lyons and St. Étienne, 1918; *Bull. Mensuel de la Foire de Lyon* (before 1920), Lyons, (since 1920). Archives of the fair and personal information. Special acknowledgment must be made to M. Charles Touzot, general secretary of the Fair, author of many articles in the above-mentioned publications and unpublished material, and to his collaborator, M. René Hoffherr.

⁴⁴ Étienne Fougère: La foire de 1918, *Bull. de la Foire*, p. 12, Lyons, 1918.

80,000,000; automobiles and cycles, 70,000,000; agricultural implements, 56,000,000; machinery, 50,000,000. Then followed electrical apparatus, metallurgical goods, leather goods, industrial construction materials, hardware, chemical products, boots and shoes, stationery, food products, colonial products, paper, ready-made clothing, furniture, hosiery, heating apparatus, skins and furs, silks (only 10,000,000), watches and clocks, toys, building materials, pottery, woolen goods, and lastly corsets and haberdashery (5,000,000). Amongst the diversity one notes the relatively small showing made by the products of the industrial region of Lyons proper; silks in particular, although this product is peculiarly adapted to such a form of sale. The reason is simple enough; the silk merchants of the town do not take the trouble to exhibit at the fair when they can benefit by the arrival of buyers in the town. It is but another instance of the permanent and fundamental unlikeness of interests between town and fair.

At Lyons, however, this unlikeness of interests is reduced to a minimum because the committee for the direction of the fair is exclusively composed of townspeople and the initiative came from the municipality itself, as five centuries before was the case with our old commodity fairs of which we flatter ourselves this is a revival. The fair is the private enterprise of a joint-stock company, but it has the strong support of the municipality, which indeed appears to be taking an increasingly great share in it. The administration of the fair has its headquarters in the town hall.

With all this, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that town and fair are distinct. To the average tourist they will probably appear more distinct than at Leipzig. Lyons is much less crowded and disturbed by the fair than is the German center. Of course there is greater animation than usual; the streets are illuminated at night, hotels and places of entertainment are filled, and the shopkeepers of the town show special displays; but there are no parades nor particular festivities, and the daily routine of the town is not sensibly changed. The gathering is exclusively a business affair and only frequented by business men. For this reason a good part of the fair, unlike that of Leipzig, does not occupy town buildings but has its own installations either temporary or permanent within or near the town. The only exceptions are two permanent services—the administration and a permanent exposition. The greater part of the fair is installed in temporary wooden structures erected twice a year on the public squares and the extensive quays along the banks of the Rhone. The number of these erections, however, is diminishing; and they will eventually be replaced by a stone building now in the course of erection on a great open space of common land outside the town. It is expected that this building will be completed in ten years and it is believed in Lyons that it will be the largest in the world. It will cover an area of 1,200 meters by 50 meters and will be four stories high. It is planned to include 64 separate pavilions connected by continuous galleries and comprising 1,360 exhibition stands, accommodations for the participants of the fair, rooms for meetings and conferences, restaurants, postal



FIG. 15



FIG. 16

FIG. 15—The sample fair of Lyons in 1921, temporary buildings on the public squares of the town. Compare Figure 14.

FIG. 16—A portion of the fair palace of Lyons, 2 of the 64 pavilions under construction. Compare Figure 14.

and telegraph offices; and it already has railroad connection and a station of its own. Thus buyers and sellers at the fair can sojourn there and transact their business *without once setting foot in the town*. The fair palace will be a complete town in itself, adjacent to Lyons but living only twice a year for a fortnight each time. This typical independent organization of the fair shows the essential features of its kind, elsewhere only completely realized at Nijni Novgorod. But Leipzig also is constructing permanent fair buildings and dreams of the erection of a great edifice, a skyscraper thirty stories high with 3,000 stands and 22 elevators. Nothing demonstrates better the fundamental distinction between fair and town that we have pointed out as characteristic from the earliest beginnings of the institution.

We cannot leave the fair of Lyons without briefly remarking on its sphere of economic influence. If silk makes a poor showing, other industries of the town are well represented—automobiles, chemical goods, shoes, and certain food stuffs. But the greater number of the products pertain to the surrounding industrial region and to southeastern France in general—the agricultural implements of the Saône valley, the electrical industries of the Alps, the machinery and tools of lower Dauphiné, of the northern Jura and Belfort and the Central Massif, especially St. Étienne and its neighborhood. The *umland* of the fair is clearly defined (Fig. 13), and it is a buyer as well as a seller; it gives the fair its complete rôle of an organ adapted to import as well as local export. The sphere of the fair, however, tends to stretch beyond this limited area to embrace the whole of France and even to pass the French frontiers. Only in the measure that one goes farther away from the town are other influences felt, and it is not the only sample fair frequented. Competitors are encountered in foreign countries, and even in France its domain is limited by the newer and more specialized fairs of Paris and Bordeaux. Yet it embraces a number of exterior relations that recall the activities of the great commodity fairs of ancient days. In November, 1921, it had agencies, private consulates as it were, in Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Milan, Rotterdam, Sarrebrück, London, Stockholm, Christiania, Seville, Constantinople, New York, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Peking. Its directors see in it not only a means of encouraging the French export trade and a system of intellectual propaganda,⁴⁵ but a place of contact and collaboration between traders from the four corners of the world. They seek to establish twice a year at Lyons a center for commercial information, for international credit, and especially an international clearing house for goods or money. And so by a circuit across the centuries we return to one of the most striking traits of the old commodity fairs.⁴⁶

As yet, however, the rôle of the Lyons fair is predominantly national.

⁴⁵ This function recalls that of the ancient fairs of Lyons in the sixteenth century. They were the great center of the French book trade, as later those of Leipzig were for Germany. The printers of the town arranged publication for the time of the fairs. Caravans from the Mediterranean countries, especially Spain, after having sold their merchandise took books as return cargo. It has been repeatedly shown that the great fairs were an excellent means of diffusion of knowledge. See Alengry, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ An instance of this international collaboration at the fairs is the fact that at the spring fair of 1921 the International Labor Bureau had a stand at Lyons.

Above all, during the war it rendered great service by making known French products, replacing those erstwhile obtained from Germany, an inverse form of the *Ersätze* of the Leipzig fair. It also served in equalizing the inequalities of supply and demand during the abnormal war and postwar periods.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE SAMPLE FAIR⁴⁷

The advantages offered by the sample fair have proved such that during the last five years several have been created in imitation of those of Leipzig

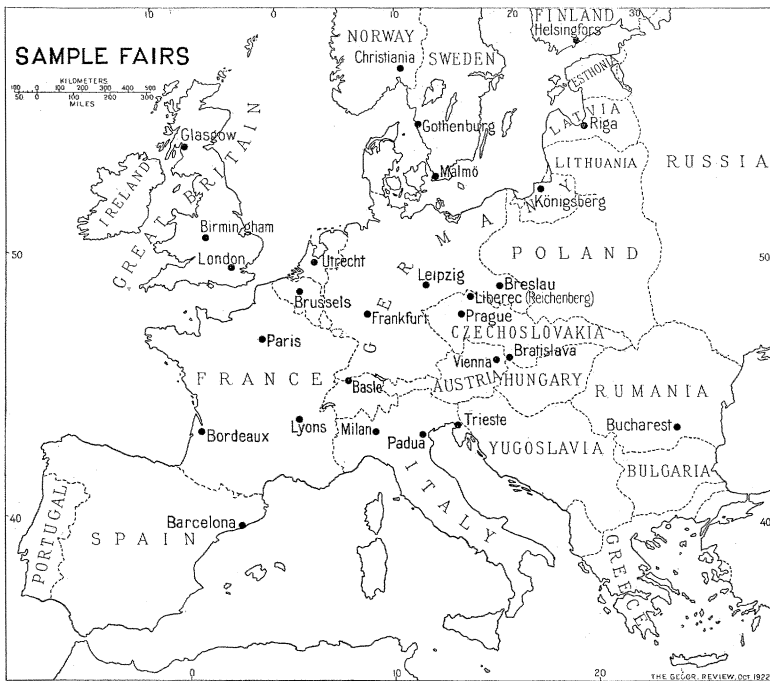


FIG. 17—Map showing distribution of the chief sample fairs of Europe in 1921.

and Lyons. Figure 14 shows the distribution of the principal sample fairs of Europe up to November, 1921. The oldest, after the two examples we have discussed above, is that of London, which dates from the spring of 1916. We shall say nothing of the geographic circumstances governing the location of these fairs, for this has already been developed apropos of the commodity fairs. It may be remarked that the majority of the new fairs have been organized like that of Lyons, with the specific intention of encouraging export from the home country. Each economic power has instituted one, sometimes several; in the latter event they may become competitive—a contingency that has been feared in the case of the three French fairs. They can, how-

⁴⁷ J. J. Martin: Les foires françaises et étrangères, in "Semaine du commerce extérieur," *Assn. Natl. d'Expansion Econ.*, Paris, 1921, pp. 208-221.

ever, act in collaboration; and this is the case with the three fairs of Great Britain which are held in such a way that the stranger can visit the three in a single trip.

As a consequence of each country having its own fair and seeking its own interests in competition with those of its neighbors, the respective *umlands* tend to coincide with the limits of the states; and hence they tend to be national in their normal function. They are international only for special reasons and now and then. The present tariff situation in Europe tends to frustrate growth of the international character that distinguished the ancient fairs. But if there is any institution that can ultimately transcend this barrier and reanimate international trade it would seem to be the fair with the various customs, fiscal, and transit privileges that lie within its power to secure.⁴⁸ We recognize in the sample fairs, as in the commodity fairs, the initial needs of frontier trade which, with the necessity for mobility, is the actual creator of the institution.

OTHER KINDS OF FAIRS

There also exist other phenomena of commercial geography which are more or less related to the sample fairs and which are sometimes known as "fairs." Such are exhibitions known as "world fairs"—a term that came into universal use from the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago in 1893. The idea of the world fair dates back to that inaugurated by the Society of Arts in London in 1851 and held under the presidency of the Prince Consort. It was quickly followed by like international exhibitions at New York and Dublin in 1853, Melbourne and Munich in 1854, Paris in 1855, and subsequently by many other well-known examples.⁴⁹ These, however, do not pass beyond what may be described as the advertisement stage and cannot properly be considered fairs, for they carry no mechanism for sale nor financial organization. The participants, for instance, charge their expenses to the publicity budget, while the participants of the fairs charge it against their sales accounts.⁵⁰ Exhibitions have only the superficial appearance of the real fair, from which even in that respect they are vastly different in the number of side shows and attractions for sightseers, sedulously avoided in the business fairs. On the other hand, the initial idea of the sample fair is approached in the fair of Kiev, discussed above under commodity fairs, which for half a century has made sales on order.

Other commercial events that approach more closely the sample fairs and which might even be included in that category are the annual motor and

⁴⁸ In illustration we may quote from a note in *U. S. Commerce Reports*, August 22, 1916, on "Lyon's Second Sample Fair." "The French Government on May 11, 1916, issued a decree prohibiting the importation of certain goods, and this prohibition is so extensive that it threatens to materially affect the importations from the United States. However, the mayor of Lyon, who is also a senator [deputy since 1919], has advised me of his success in obtaining a modification of this decree in so far as it applies to orders taken at the fair."

⁴⁹ See the article "Exhibition" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in which is also traced the history of the earlier national exhibitions.

⁵⁰ Ch. Tougot in *Lyon*, October, 1920.

cycle shows for the last twenty years held annually in London and Paris (since 1920 Paris has added an aeronautic show); they have been established expressly from the sales point of view and exclusively by sample. They may be considered rudimentary or, rather, specialized fairs as so many merchandise fairs became in their decline. They seem to indicate that under certain conditions specialization is necessarily forced on the sample fair and suggest that that may be a line of evolution followed in the future.

Finally, there is a new form of the sample fair to which indeed the strict constructionist would refuse the name of fair⁵¹ but which is permissible according to our definition and is so described by the commercial world. These are either intermittent or itinerant fairs.⁵² As we have seen above, there exist non-periodic commodity fairs. Similarly fairs have been recently organized under the form of expositions of samples with a sales organization attached but without intention of periodicity. Such were the fairs of Fez in 1916 and Rabat in 1917. These enterprises are most commonly organized in a foreign country with the object of soliciting a market. It was for this purpose that French business organizations arranged the "French fair of Stockholm" in 1920. Various countries, of which Great Britain was the first, have conceived the idea of sample fairs which travel to foreign countries and take up orders. Such a project in grandiose form is evidently only realizable by sea: in England it is one of the activities of the "Department of Overseas Trade" (Joint Department of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade) established in 1917. The Netherlands, Italy, and Russia have circulated "floating fairs" on a small scale. France has given to the idea a more restrained form in her "sample trains," following a plan which had been devised in Russia in 1895 to compensate the inconveniences caused by the enormous distances in the Russian Empire. In 1920 a French train fair traveled through North America, notably in Canada. These ambulant fairs depart from the normal institution in that as yet they are purely national in character, officially designed as economic propaganda, that they have reference only to exportation, and above all in that they are not a place of rendezvous and of periodic contact between neighboring peoples. We shall, however, class them as fairs inasmuch as they possess to a supreme degree the basic geographical trait that they are itinerant commercial organisms.

Conclusion

As the aim of the preceding discussion has been to portray the fundamental resemblance in the several kinds of fairs under the variety of forms they display, the discussion has inevitably assumed the character of a somewhat formal and abstract analysis: an intensely living and moving subject has perforce been reduced to dry categories. We should now like to see produced a number of monographs describing in detail this particular manifestation of

⁵¹ See footnote 21.

⁵² J. J. Martin, *op. cit.*

human activity in all its picturesque complexity; for among its multitudinous aspects it would be quite possible to disengage those of enduring value and geographical bearing.

DEFINITION OF THE FAIR

It remains for us to give a geographic definition of the institution of the "fair." A tentative definition was advanced by the writer in 1914,⁵³ but a recent discussion has put in question his formula.⁵⁴ The definition of 1914 read "*a parasitic town, existing intermittently, periodically superposed upon a permanent town, for the needs of the import and export trade of an umland.*" M. Roletto rejects as uncalled-for the neologism *umland*; but, as we have shown above, it possesses a more precise connotation than "economic domain." On the other hand, study of the fair, especially the merchandise fair, shows that its function often exceeds the needs of its *umland*⁵⁵ and hence that this word is not indispensable to the definition. We shall then modify it by substituting for the last phrase "*for the needs of itinerant commerce of a region in its entirety.*"

M. Roletto denies the fair the right to the title of "town," because, he says, of its lack of habitations. But fairs with habitations are in fact more numerous than others; and the two cases of Goncein and Pinerolo, analyzed above, are rather exceptional. Every one is familiar with the hawker's "caravan;" we have made reference to the accommodations provided in the fair buildings of Nijni Novgorod and Lyons and by the *fonduks* of medieval times and of the Islamic countries at the present day; and even when the fair invades the town, as at Leipzig, it loans dwellings for its own proper, if temporary, use. We maintain, then, our conception of the fair as a town, but an intermittent town, sometimes even, in part or whole, a nomad town. In a recent novel the term "wandering city" (*l'errante cité*)⁵⁶ was aptly applied in description of a pleasure fair: it is the moving city, or the city of itinerants. M. Roletto also rejects the idea of parasitism and substitutes that of coexistence. But parasitism here carries no derogatory sense but is the translation, rational and geographic, of the idea of coexistence. The fair temporarily invades a town and occupies it for purposes alien to the life of the town while benefiting from its geographical position and site and, obviously, from its facilities for support. Surely it has the significance of the ordinary technical meaning, where the uninvited organism makes its home with its host, but with the difference that the fair is frequently chosen by its host. M. Roletto has good reason to speak apropos of the fair of the *agglomeramento ospite*; it seems to us that he there gives expression to a new and useful idea—"host town," as we should render it in English, *ville-hôtesse* in French, and *Wirthstadt* in German. It is, with the *umland*, one of

⁵³ *Op. cit.*, p. 333.

⁵⁴ Roletto, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-134.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* M. Roletto shows it perfectly for the live-stock fair of Pinerolo.

⁵⁶ Jacques Chardonne: *L'Épithalame*, Paris, 1921, Vol. 1, p. 3.

the fundamental elements in the definition of every fair. Finally, in a formula inspired by the preceding but expressly limited by him to the particular case of Pinerolo, M. Roletto declares that the intermittent institution of the fair has been "created to satisfy the local and extra-local needs of a commerce specifically determined by the geographic conditions of the *host town*."⁵⁷ Our analysis, however, has shown that in general the rôle of the host town is much more limited; normally it is even more limited than that of the *umland*, since in the same region the sites of fairs can be changed while the business of the fairs remains unchanged. Therefore we maintain our definition as given above.

Rather is it the geographic conditions of the region that play the important part. Needs of commerce in primitive countries, exigencies of caravan transport, age-old wanderings of the herds in pastoral lands, present-day circulation of merchants in search of customers—all these movements expressive of human activity are in the fair temporarily but conveniently enough brought together. Shorn of the accessory facts that make its picturesque diversity, the fair is the expression of the needs of men constrained by nomad life to meeting and trafficking at intervals. It plays the same rôle in itinerant life as the town plays in sedentary life.

⁵⁷ . . . "creato per soddisfare alle esigenze locali ed extralocali di un commercio voluto specialmente dalle condizioni geografiche dell' agglomeramento ospite" (p. 134).